

REMARKS

Applicants have amended their claims, subsequent to issuance of the Notice of Allowance mailed October 13, 2000, in order to further clarify the definition of the present invention. Specifically, independent claim 1, the sole independent claim in the application, has been amended to recite that the apparatus used in the method of transferring a substrate includes opening and closing devices for opening and closing one of the first and second lock chambers each time a substrate is carried into said one of the first and second lock chambers, one by one, and each time a substrate is carried out of said one of the first and second lock chambers, one by one. Claim 1 has been further amended, in the recited method steps utilizing this apparatus, to correct an omission of the word "been" (correcting a grammatical error); to recite that the closing off of the one of the first and second lock chambers, from the atmospheric transferring device, is by using the opening and closing devices; and to recite that the closing of the one of the first and second lock chambers, to which the substrate is transferred after the processing, from the vacuum processing chamber, is performed by using the opening and closing devices, and, after that, the opening of the one of the first and second lock chambers, having the substrate therein, to air, is performed by using the opening and closing devices. Claim 2 has been amended in light of amendments to claim 1, and to correct a typographical error.

Clearly, the presently amended claims are supported by Applicants' original disclosure; note, for example, the

paragraph bridging pages 5 and 6, and the paragraph bridging pages 7 and 8, of Applicants' specification. Note also, for example, the paragraph bridging pages 9 and 10, the paragraph bridging pages 11 and 12, and the first full paragraph on page 12, of Applicants' specification.

Also being submitted concurrently herewith is an Information Disclosure Statement Under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98, and necessary Petition, for having the Examiner consider two documents only recently discovered in connection with the subject matter of the above-identified application.

Initially, it is respectfully requested that the present amendments be entered. It is respectfully submitted that the present amendments are necessary in order that the invention present be defined with sufficient clarity to form an adequate basis for an enforceable contract. That is, particularly in view of the presently submitted documents in the concurrently filed Information Disclosure Statement, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments are necessary to clarify the subject matter of the present invention.

Moreover, noting the claims as previously allowed, and that the present amendments clearly further define the invention, defining additional apparatus used in the claimed method, and defining how this further apparatus is used in the claimed method, and also noting the presently submitted documents provided under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments require no substantial amount of additional work on the part of the Office. In this regard, and as mentioned previously, it is

respectfully submitted that the present amendments are necessary in order to further clarify the definition of the present invention, in light of, for example, the presently submitted documents. Noting that the present amendments further clarify subject matter in all of the present claims, by defining further structure and operation of such structure in the claimed method, such structure being the opening and closing devices, it is respectfully submitted that the newly amended claims will require no additional search or examination, and are allowable at least in light of the newly added recitations in the present claims.

Furthermore, it is respectfully submitted that the present amendments are timely. In this regard, noting in particular the presently submitted documents in the concurrently filed Information Disclosure Statement, it is respectfully submitted that these documents were only recently discovered, and thus the need desirability of the present amendments only became clear after discovery of the presently submitted documents and understanding of the pertinence thereof.

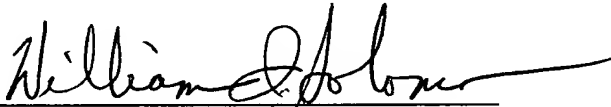
In view of all of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the necessary showing under 37 CFR 1.312 has been made. Accordingly, entry of the present amendments, and, after consideration of the concurrently filed documents, issuance of a U.S. patent based upon the above-identified application in due course, are respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any

shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 503.30414V18) and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William I. Solomon", written over a horizontal line.

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